Supernatural, Dean, Hell.

PG, Dean-centric character study, set mid season four.

Dean dreams of red corridors.

He dreams of chains and knives and when he wakes up sometimes he can still feel a phantom pain from some injury that he suffered while he was down below.

The nights when he goes to bed intact, without a single aching spot or even a touch of soreness, those are the nights when his dreams are faded, blurry.

Those are the nights when his memories of Hell are indistinct and a haze of red walls and liquid and pain.

Those are the nights when he wakes up gasping, shamed, for when he stares into the mirror in the early morning, he sees longing in his eyes. Those are the nights when his brother in the next bed over isn't who he wants accompanying him.

Those are the nights when he wakes up itching to pick up a knife and *use* it, and Dean - Dean isn't that any more. He can't let himself be that, not even when it would be so easy to tie Sam down and *make* him stop hanging out with Ruby.

Those are the nights when Dean misses Hell most.